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VALLEY  
o f  
DECISION





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THE  
VALLEY OF DECISION;

OR,

DIVINE TEACHINGS IN A BOARDING SCHOOL.

A TRUE NARRATIVE.

BY  
MRS H. C. KNIGHT.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE scenes described in this narrative are a record of circumstances, some of which passed under the personal observation of the writer, and the rest are vouched for by a friend from whom they were received. It is believed they may be relied on as having actually taken place as here described; and it is hoped they may be eminently useful to the multitudes who will, no doubt, be interested to read them, and especially young ladies, in course of education, to whom they are particularly adapted.



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# THE VALLEY OF DECISION.

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## CHAPTER I.

LUCY, ELIZA, AND JANETTE.

“I WISH I was at home,” exclaimed Lucy Barnard to her companion, as, arm in arm, they walked up and down the large drawing-room of a female seminary one Saturday evening; “I wish I was at home.”

“Why, Lucy! you who are such a good scholar, and so near the examination, when every body says you will carry the day! Now I, no wonder I might wish to go home;—but of late it *is* dreadfully stupid here.”

“That’s the very reason why I want to go ; this stupidity, or seriousness, as Mrs Watson calls it ; why, do you know Mrs Watson wants us all to become religious ! ”

“Religious ! of all things ! Does she think we are all going to die ? We are too young to think about these things yet. As for me, I intend to enjoy myself first,” exclaimed Lucy’s companion, Eliza Davis.

“Enjoy myself or not, I never will submit to become religious. Father says, these conversions, revivals, or excitements, are all nonsense ; he says we are naturally religious, and if we do our duty, it is enough.”

Ah, Lucy was right. Doing our duty is enough. But it becomes a very important question, what duty is ? A mistake here may prove a fatal mistake.

“I don’t know but these things are right enough,” replied Eliza, “but I do not think it is the right time for me to attend to them now.”

At that moment they were joined by another,

who, taking Lucy's arm, said, in a low, earnest tone, "All the professors of religion have been sent for to go to Mrs Watson's room. Some, I think, must have been unwilling to go. O, if there is any thing I hate, it is a half-way Christian! If a person professes piety, let her live piously. Miss Otis, in our room, never shows any more interest in religious subjects than half the girls do; she is always so interested in all our plans and frolics; but I never heard her say one word upon religion. I have particularly observed it."

"It is because religion is not what your ministers say it is, Janette. They try to frighten people. You remember the sermon last Sabbath? Father says, it is very unlikely God will punish us for ever for a few sins in this world,—very unlikely. God is a tender Father, Janette. I wish you could hear our minister preach. He always makes God so tender, kind,—so merciful. I love to hear *his* sermons," said Lucy, earnestl .

“ Yes, Lucy, but is not God a judge too ?”

“ Not the unjust judge,—but I always think of him as a Father, blessing us, or as the Great Maker of the universe, ‘ the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament showing his handiwork ; day unto day uttering speech ;’ you remember it, Janette. Such views as these are honourable views, Mr B—— says. But people of your denomination”—

“ For the love of mercy,” said Eliza, “ spare us a dispute, and a religious dispute, of all things. People never gain any thing by arguing about religion. But do tell me, Janette, what Mrs Watson was saying to you this afternoon, which made you look so serious.”

Janette hesitated, and blushed ; but at last said, “ About my soul, Eliza ; and I am sure she felt what she said ; I wish I was as good as she is.” Janette looked serious, and sighed.

“ You are both silly girls,” exclaimed Eliza. “ It is much wiser for Lucy to rest contented,

because she cannot go home ; and as for you, my good, dear Janette, if you think the effort worth making, you can very soon be as good as the best person in the world,—Mrs Watson, for instance."

" As good as she ! It is in vain to think of it ;—how delighted mother would be if I were to become a Christian."

" You are good enough now, Janette," said Lucy. " Father says it is much ado about nothing, all this trying to be religious."

" Ah, Lucy, if I could think so ; but my heart tells me, and the Bible tells me, far otherwise. I feel that all is not right within me. I know if I were to die to-night, I am not prepared to meet God." Janette spoke earnestly, and betrayed an anxiety which she had long felt, although it was generally concealed in the presence of her companions.

" But as you will not probably die to-night, you will have time enough to repent. I am sure I mean to, some time or other. Are you

really growing serious?" replied Eliza, in a more serious tone than she usually assumed.

"I hope you are not growing superstitious," said Lucy, with a faint smile of contempt, mingled with compassion, playing about her mouth.

"Perhaps I am growing reasonable, though," rejoined Janette.

Happily the uncomfortable pause which succeeded was now soon interrupted by the loud ringing of the evening bell, and the three parted—it was with less regret than usual.

Who were Lucy, Janette, and Eliza? Three young girls, just on the verge of womanhood, who were about completing a course of education at Mrs Watson's seminary. They had been together nearly two years, pursuing the same studies, and engaging in the same duties. They had thus become intimate. Indeed, circumstances, in a measure, had made them so; for they were unlike in their characters, and different in their habits both of thinking and acting.

The boarding-school connected with Mrs Watson's seminary numbered about forty young ladies; all under the kind and judicious management of the lady herself, who watched with almost a mother's solicitude over the interests of her youthful family. In committing daughters to her care, parents felt that they intrusted them to one who, with intelligent convictions of duty, joined to a highly cultivated mind and warm affections, would endeavour to discharge towards them the duties of a teacher with no common fidelity, as she did with no common success. How many hearts glow with love at the remembrance of the beloved Mrs Watson !

It had been some time since any serious attention to religion had been manifested by the members of the school, though, in times past, the pious and prayerful efforts of the teachers had been rewarded by seeing many of their pupils enter on the service of God. It drew towards the close of a term when many

were to leave who had long enjoyed the religious instruction of the family, without giving evidence that they had become the subjects of renewing grace. They were to leave a place whose quiet and seclusion seemed to afford them the best opportunity to reflect and decide upon the great interests of the soul. Mrs Watson felt that she could not let them depart, to meet the trials, the temptations, the pleasures of life, without those fixed religious principles which alone can steady the youthful spirit, and stimulate it to interest and fidelity in the difficult and responsible duties that are the allotment of a woman's life.

Among those young ladies who were professors of religion—and there were generally about twelve or fifteen—a few only seemed to feel the claims of the Saviour to walk in “newness of life.” The rest walked as others walked, did as others did; and there was little—indeed nothing—to distinguish them from *other members* of the school, but their sitting

around the table of the Lord at the regular communion seasons. Few there were who really retained the spirit, as well as the form of piety. Yet these were now in earnest for the spiritual welfare of their companions. O, if the world saw the disciples of the Saviour more in *earnest*, they would more frequently and more seriously examine his claims upon themselves! These often went apart for prayer ; and from that lonely chamber, who can tell what an influence went up to the throne of grace, calling down rich blessings upon the school !

The situation of a school-girl professing piety is a very responsible one. Thrown into immediate contact with the impenitent, who are willing to make every deficiency in duty in others an excuse for neglecting it themselves, every word and action are watched with a scrutinizing eye. The stand she takes is necessarily prominent, and the influence she exerts for or against her Master's cause, is above *human estimation*. A young Christian, whose

heart is glowing with divine love, needs no wider sphere for pious effort than that which her school presents. Consistent Christian example, and an honest and tender regard for the salvation of souls, operate far more powerfully upon the young than upon those whose hearts are seared by long intercourse with the world.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SOUND OF RAIN.

MRS WATSON thought at this time she discerned an increasing seriousness of feeling among some members of her family; there was a hearing ear whenever the subject of religion was introduced among those who had been most indifferent, and more than ordinary solemnity characterized the hour of morning and evening worship. She felt it was a most important season; one of those crises when a little more watchfulness, and more activity on the part of the Saviour's disciples, might be attended with glorious results.

She accordingly requested such, both pupils and teachers, to meet in her room, that she might urge upon them the duties of active piety

at such a time. She endeavoured to make each one feel that it was her duty, as far as opportunity offered, to converse with her impenitent companions, and lead them to the Saviour. "The field is white unto the harvest, and if we are found unfaithful labourers, how shall we meet the Lord of the harvest?" said Mrs Watson, impressively. They sought the aid and outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and when, after an hour, they all parted, each knew her duty, however she felt about performing it.

It was late that night when a gentle knock at the teacher's door announced a visitor. Miss Otis entered the apartment. Scarcely was she seated, when she burst into tears, exclaiming—"O, Mrs Watson, what can I do? My heart is burdened; I feel I can do nothing; I have not lived like a Christian; nobody will believe me sincere, if I speak about salvation."

*Mrs Watson was deeply affected, as she re-*

plied, “ Begin then now, my child, to live like a Christian ; continuing to neglect duty will never make its performance easier.”

“ O, but you do not know, you cannot know, how I have betrayed my religious principles among the girls. I have been *afraid* to act as my duty dictated ; they have said a great deal about our being bigoted, exclusive, sectarian, proselyting. I determined they should not make that remark of me, and I believe I have always tried to show that my religion imposed no restraints on me. In doing so, I have suffered things again and again to pass by which I knew were wrong, without saying one word.”

“ Repentance for the past is the first step towards amendment, my dear,” replied her teacher. You mistake, as many others have done, in supposing you could do more good, or that you could *recommend* piety, by living as if you were governed by no higher principles than your irreligious companions. This is a *very great mistake*, my child ; they know

what a Christian should be, and they *expect* holy living."

"I know it, Mrs Watson; and often have I gone to bed weeping when I thought what an influence I was exerting. I always hoped to do better in future. But I could not resolve to begin. Had I only begun right in the first place!"

"But, Anne, you know it is *never* too late to begin doing right. We all need moral courage; many have not courage enough to lead a holy life; they are afraid, like you, of being called too strict or too sectarian; but it ought not so to be, my child. If we love the Saviour, we must be willing to follow his example; and if we feel how precious is his love to us, shall we not want others to enjoy it, Anne?"

"O, yes, indeed; and once I thought I did love the Saviour; but I am sure I have no evidence now that I deserved to be ranked among his disciples;" and Anne's tears almost *choked her utterance*.

“ Your sorrow does not show a hardened heart, Anne,” said the teacher, affectionately putting her arm around the sorrowful girl, and speaking words of comfort and encouragement.

“ Do the young ladies in your room ever evince any interest upon religious subjects ?” asked Mrs Watson, after a short pause.

“ Janette is at times very thoughtful, especially after receiving letters from her mother. She often reads the Bible very attentively ; but she says, if she judges piety by some of its professors, there cannot be much in it. I am sure it is not strange she should say so. Poor Lucy Barnard can never feel, I fear.”

“ Say not thus, my child ; God’s Spirit can subdue the proudest and hardest heart ; and, Anne, shall we not pray for her and ourselves ?” They knelt, the teacher and her pupil.

Anne Otis was a pious girl, but she had erred. Coming from a home where the principles of piety were applied to all the circumstances

of life, and thrown into immediate contact with irreligious companions, she was at first shocked by their levity and indifference. She reproved them, and retreated to her chamber. This she soon felt was unpopular, and how could she hope to recommend religion by "moping in her room," as the girls said? A faithful discharge of Christian duty sometimes subjected her to envious and unkind remarks, and she gradually grew less vigilant and prayerful. With this came a loss of that tenderness of spiritual feeling which made her shrink from sin, and often weep for the salvation of souls. By compromising the strictness and purity of her piety, she trusted she should gain friends to the principles of the gospel. Was she not mistaken?

"I declare, I am glad Miss Otis has become one of us; I feel a great deal more comfortable," exclaimed Eliza Beckwith, one day, after a transaction which need not be recorded.

"Why so, Eliza?"

"*Good people* always make me feel naughty,

to be sure: so I contrive to dislike and avoid them. By-and-by I mean to be good; but now, I don't want to be perpetually reminded that I am not."

Upon a closer acquaintance with her room-mates, Miss Otis saw that, although Lucy was really ignorant of what the Bible contained, Janette was often serious, and had frequently endeavoured to lead the conversation to religious subjects. "Anne, do you think the preacher means all he says, to-day?"

"He had too much gesture," replied Anne. O, how cold an answer to one who felt the burden of sin!

But Anne was far from happiness. She became sad and dejected; she knew she was not living as a disciple of the Saviour should live; but she had wandered far,—how could she return? Every day came with its rapid succession of duties, and she could never seem to see the time to stop, to reflect, to reform. Are there not many like Anne?

## CHAPTER III.

### SABBATH SHOWERS.

THE Sabbath was too frequently a wearisome day to many of Mrs Watson's youthful household. Each one was required to remain in her own room during the hours preceding the forenoon service; and this season, allotted for devotion, reflection, and serious reading, was too frequently considered the "stupidest part of the day," as Eliza Davis said.

On the Sabbath morning succeeding what has been recorded, a pile of tracts was laid upon the drawing-room table, while the family were assembled at breakfast.

"O, here are some tracts; I am so glad," cried the little girl, who first caught sight of them. "Let us carry some up to our room."

"*Tracts are for proselyting,*" thought Lucy

Barnard, as she passed by, replying in an offended tone to a companion who offered her one. "They are not for me."

Eliza Davis chose a story. "I can get through something of the story kind," she whispered to Janette. Janette took one too, and she did so, hoping to find something to do her good.

Soon all the tracts disappeared from the table; and the reception of that little bundle of tracts, by a group of school-girls, was the same, I suppose, which Divine truth always meets with among men. Whether the sermons were more than usually impressive or not, is not remembered; but they were heard with an unusual degree of attention.

Towards the latter part of Sabbath afternoon, the young ladies usually left their own rooms, and, arm in arm, promenaded the hall, or the drawing-room, or the long shady alleys of the large garden; some gathered in groupes by the windows; some under the trees. If one

passed by, perhaps the conversation over ~~thea~~ was not always such as befits the holiness of the day.

On this Sabbath of my story, far different was the aspect of things among this busy little community. Stilness rested every where around. Almost every one remained within her own room, and the one or two, who occasionally passed and repassed the stairs, seemed involuntarily to step more softly than usual.

After tea, the bell rang for evening prayers. As group after group entered the room, and took their accustomed seats, the half suppressed joke or titter, which even respect for the day did not wholly suppress, was not heard. There was a serious thoughtfulness upon every face, which bespoke the presence of deeper feelings working within the bosom, before which mirth and gaiety for a season gave way. A chapter was read from the large Bible, which always held a conspicuous place in the drawing-room, upon which Mrs Watson made some

suitable and appropriate remarks. She was followed in prayer by her two assistant teachers, young ladies of deep and ardent piety. A profound solemnity pervaded the room. There was no restlessness, no moving; and our very breathing seemed hushed, as we listened to the deep, heartfelt prayers which ascended to the Throne of Mercy. Towards the close of the last prayer, a sob broke upon the stillness; it seemed to come from a heart burdened with the consciousness of suffering.

The services being closed, it was seen that many were affected, even to tears; and with several, all the reserve which they had formerly shown, when the subject of personal salvation had been introduced, had now passed away. Scorn, reproach, or censure, could no longer deter them from expressing the deep interest which they could no longer suppress. That most important question which can be asked, “What *shall* I do to be saved?” trembled on many lips. Each of the teachers went

aside into their own rooms with those who felt most deeply, while the pious girls among the pupils might be seen walking up and down the halls accompanied by those who sought conversation upon religious subjects. Others retired to their apartments, to read or to reflect; some with the intention of concealing or checking whatever emotion might have been awakened in their hearts.

It was Janette's sob which had broken in upon the stillness of the evening devotions, and she now felt in earnest upon a subject she no longer dared to neglect. O, how important are those seasons, when a strong current is setting in upon religious interests! A single word, or act, or resolution, may decide the destiny of a soul for ever! Such seasons, when they are the result of a long and judicious training in divine truth, and in the knowledge of religious duty, form the most critical era in our spiritual history. Then they are not the products of *unnatural excitement*, but the calm and legiti-

mate effects of what divine truth will accomplish, under the Spirit of God, in the mind of every one who will be induced to give any sober attention to the subject. An individual is then brought to *feel*, and then alone will she be in earnest and ready for action.

The brief history of the three girls who have already been introduced to the reader, will show how important is the injunction, "Now is the accepted time," and how dangerous it is for young persons, who have early been instructed in religious truth, to let those seasons pass by, without securing a blessing to themselves. While so much is done for the personal salvation of the young, so much more than formerly, it is a fearful thought, that with them the day of grace may early pass away, when they shall call upon God and he will not hear.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WEEK'S FRUIT.

ANNE OTIS, Janette, and Lucy, occupied the same chamber. When Anne retired that night, she felt happier than she had for some time. She had bitterly mourned over her departure from God, and she was now beginning again to feel that sweet interest in divine things which she had formerly enjoyed. When she awoke the next morning, Janette and Lucy had already arisen. Lucy had left the room. Janette sat at her table with the Bible and a letter open before her. The letter was wet with her tears, and her eyes were covered by her handkerchief. In a short time, Anne approached her, and putting her arm affectionately about her neck, inquired if she had

received bad news? Janette replied by placing the letter in Anne's hand. She read as follows:—

“As this day, my Janette, commemorates both your birth and your baptism, I cannot forbear expressing the anxieties which agitate your mother's bosom, for the eternal welfare of her only and beloved child. You are the object of many, many prayers. The last words of your dying father, when I held you to him, a baby in my arms, were in the almost inaudible petition, ‘O Father, sanctify and make her thine!’ You have from infancy always been surrounded by the richest means of grace; and yet, Janette, I know not that you have given up your heart to the Saviour, or have ever shed the tear of true penitence. You have not yet resolved to seek him with the *whole* heart. I know, when you reflect, you feel dissatisfied and uneasy. You carry a burden upon your heart which you can never forget, and never cast off, until you cast it at the

feet of Jesus. He alone can bear the burden of sin, for 'he is mighty to save.' I cannot express how much I feel for you, while away from home, although I know you are under the best religious influences. But, Janette, are you going to live on, month after month, and year after year, unaffected by the riches of his grace? O, my child, every day your heart is becoming harder and harder, and you will become less interested in spiritual things. Why delay what you hope, what you intend to do, at some future time? The future *may* never come to you in this world; and if it does, you may cease to feel at all. O, let the goodness of God lead you to repentance! Your parents have dedicated you to his service. Will you withhold your zeal? Will you stand cold, while he is heaping his blessings upon you? Will you give your time and influence to his enemies? Perhaps you *do* wish to give yourself to Jesus, and make him your *portion*. 'He waits to be gracious,'—let no

misgivings keep you away. Though 'dead in trespasses and sins,' he can give you repentance, salvation, and holiness. Go to him for every thing. He promises to give to every one who asks. Count every thing but loss, my child, that you may win him. Come, beloved, to the Fountain of living waters, for he has said, 'If any man thirst, let him come to me.' 'Come all ye who are weary and heavy laden.' How precious does that Saviour appear. He has been a very 'present help in time of need.' He has shown himself the God of the widow and fatherless ; and as his power has preserved you, my child, so let his mercy allure you. My heart's constant desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be washed in his precious blood, and be made an instrument of much good in his cause ; and let me again, my Janette, affectionately entreat you *now* to attend to those things which pertain to your soul's highest welfare.

"Grandmother sends her love, and is very

happy in the prospect of seeing you before a long time. Let me soon hear from you, my child ; and may the Lord bless and sanctify you.—Your affectionate mother.”

“ Am I not hardened, indeed, to resist such an appeal ? ” said Janette. “ It is the letter I received last week, and I am sure I have not been happy since. I fear I shall never become a Christian ; there must be something peculiar in my case.”

“ Do not say so, Janette. The Saviour will receive you, if you come to him needy.”

“ O, I know it all,—I know all you can say ; but I cannot do it. I cannot believe. I cannot, as it were, draw near to the Saviour, and I am afraid to return into indifference. What can I do ? ”

Her friend was deeply affected. “ If you will forgive my past unfaithfulness, I will indeed tell you of Jesus’ love, of his willingness to receive even the greatest sinners.” A long conversation ensued ;—the breakfast bell rang ;

—breakfast was eaten, and it was nearly school-time, before they took note of the lateness of the hour.

“ I thank you, Anne,” said Janette, “ for your affectionate interest in me. I suppose all you say is true ; but—but, I have put off so long what I knew to be immediate duty,—I have broken so many resolutions,—I have so often endeavoured to live like a Christian, and utterly failed, that some times I am tempted to despair.”

Poor Janette ! She herself made difficult what is, in reality, the simplest exercise of the heart,—believing. She had always, at times, been subject to deep religious impressions ; but, with strange inconsistency, she had sought relief from sin in making resolutions of amendment,—in reading religious books ;—she would have gone upon a pilgrimage, could it avail any thing. She did every thing but go directly to the Saviour, and cast the burden at his feet.

Anne besought her to devote that ~~day~~ importunate prayer, and resolve not to ~~let~~ pass without obtaining a blessing.

Janette consented, though she did cast her eyes upon her book, and wondered if it were worth while for her to make the effort.

“Not going into school!” exclaimed Lucy when she learned Janette’s intention, “when every day is so important in our studies!”

“She feels how important to-day is, and therefore does not go into school,” replied Miss Otis, as they left the room together.

“It seems strange that a woman of Mr Watson’s sense and dignity will get up these excitements. Half the girls in the house look as poor Janette does,—girls of quick imaginations. It is much to be regretted.”

“Perhaps you will not always think so, dear Lucy,” replied Anne, as she left her; while Eliza turned round from an open window in the great hall, at which she was standing thoughtful.

“ There, Eliza, are you serious, too ? ” said Lucy, “ I shall be left quite alone.” There was a slight tinge of raillery in Lucy’s tone.

“ O no, I am not serious, Lucy,” replied Eliza ; “ one cannot help feeling something. I am sure I mean to become a Christian, some time or other, but ” —— she hesitated, for she feared Lucy.

“ That is, you intend to be duped by priestcraft, some time or other, just as soon as you can shake off your common sense, as cousin George says. I do wish he was here now.”

There were many seats deserted in the large school-room on that day, and all the succeeding days of the week. As the religious interest was almost entirely confined to the members of Mrs Watson’s household, the exercises of the school were continued as usual for the pupils coming from families residing in the village.

That week will never be forgotten by any one, who was at that time a pupil at the

B—— school, though time and distance separate from that interesting spot. Ordinary occupations were for a day or two suspended, in the all-absorbing interest which was felt in the subject of religion. Opposition there certainly was, as there always will be, where sin is ; but open opposition soon shrunk away before the earnestness and solemnity of deep feeling. In every chamber there were found some striving to enter the narrow way.

## CHAPTER V.

### STOUT-HEARTED AND FAR FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS.

MRS WATSON was solicitous to remove every thing fitted to interrupt or disturb the present state of feeling: while she rejoiced in the prospect of a glorious harvest, she rejoiced with trembling. She feared the greatest open opposition from Lucy Barnard. Being of strong mind and strong prejudices, with a commanding, yet winning manner, she acquired great influence over her companions. Coming from a family decidedly worldly and irreligious, full of errors regarding true piety, Mrs Watson feared to awaken determined opposition in her heart, by direct efforts, while still she had, for a long time, endeavoured silently to implant evangelical truth in her mind, and by the at-

tentive and interested manner of her pupil, ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> trusted the good seed had taken root. ~~A~~ this time she watched her with no small ~~degree~~ of anxiety, although she felt that deference to herself might in a great measure restrain violent opposition.

Lucy had spoken of conversion with contempt and ridicule; and there were many of the girls who always said and acted as Lucy did.

“What does Miss Barnard say?” was often the last umpire.

“Lucy Barnard says she pities us to have Mrs Watson talk to us so much about religion!” said one of the little girls to her companions. “Yes, she says 'tis religion, religion all the time; and she calls us little pet saints;—there she comes; hide your Bible, I am afraid she will laugh.”

Lucy was at that moment passing through the hall to her own room. She had just come from an interview with her teacher. Mrs Watson thought the wisest course to pursue

in relation to her, might be to place her in a chamber by herself, where she would be removed from every thing which might excite her disapproving remarks. At the same time, on a mind like hers, she trusted much to her being left to the solitary communing of her own spirit. Lucy obeyed her teacher, and was soon domiciled in her new apartment. An extract from her journal will best show the state of her own mind:—

“*Sept. 25.—I wish I were at home. I am so unfortunate as to incur the displeasure of my teacher, because I choose to have an opinion of my own. I have been reading the Bible; was struck with the passage, ‘Strive to enter in,’ &c. Strive is a strong word. If it really means so, ought not people to be in earnest? I should like to see father; he sees things as they really are.*”

Wednesday afternoon Lucy sat alone in her room. A thin partition separated her from her former chamber. Janette was singing.

“ What a happy voice ! It was soon changed to the language of prayer, and Lucy heard her own name borne to the throne of mercy in tones of earnest supplication ; not a word escaped her attentive ear, as she listened with breathless interest.

The prayer was ended, and at that moment Eliza entered the chamber exclaiming, “ Neither reading, writing, nor studying. Happy indolence ! And yet you do not look quite happy either.”

“ Indeed, I am happy, very. No one ever had more to make them so than I have,” replied Lucy, desirous at all events of concealing the inquietude she really felt.

“ Ah, Lucy, you have no conscience there. If it were not for this conscience of mine, I, too, could be very happy.”

“ You had better avoid me, then. Mrs Watson would not think you very safe with a person of no conscience,” replied Lucy, gravely.

“ *I meant nothing, Lucy.* But what are you

putting on your shawl and bonnet so quickly for? Where are you going?"

"I have this instant thought of an errand which must be done this very afternoon. Now, will you go?"

She spoke hurriedly, and what she said was not strictly true. Her quick ear had detected Janette's step approaching her door, and she resolved against an interview. To her knock, Lucy answered in person, arrayed for walking.

"You are always engaged, my dear Lucy. I did hope we were to pass a part, at least, of this Wednesday afternoon together, as we used to do."

Janette's very sweet voice was sweeter and more sad than usual.

"It can never be as it used to be, Janette; I am particularly engaged now. But will you not come in?"

Lucy did not look upon her friend's face, when she said this, or as she received a closely-written note, which Janette placed in her hand, saying, "Not now, Lucy, but do read this."

and with tearful eyes returned to her own room.

Lucy hastened down stairs. Eliza followed her to the piazza, where they both paused. Breaking the note, Lucy tore it into a hundred pieces, and threw it to the winds. "So perish all the canting which is ever addressed to me. Look, Eliza Davis, I will break friendship, rather than encourage these things. I see you are becoming tinged. Now, I warn you against these excitements; they always make people worse afterwards. Mr —— says, 'Make your studies your chief attention while you are here. You betray your duty to your parents if you do not.'"

Lucy's flushed cheek showed strong agitation; and as she ran down the steps and walked rapidly away, her friend leaned against the railing, and passed her hand across her eye, as if the sight of the beautiful trees and bright sky were any thing but gladness and beauty to *her*.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ALMOST A CHRISTIAN.

NEAR sunset, in the most distant western chamber of Mrs Watson's large house, at an open window, sat a young lady. Before her were the glowing tints of an autumn sunset; the horizon was beautifully bounded by an irregular outline of distant mountains, above which lay rich folds of clouds, “in azure, green, and gold.” A large forest of oak and maple trees spread out in the scene, clothed in their autumnal foliage of red and yellow; fields of the half-gathered harvest looked out here and there, speaking of plenty and rural industry. A soft west wind blew on the light, rich curls which had fallen negligently over her neck.

Her eyes were directed towards the lovely landscape before her, but her feelings seemed not in unison with the sweet sympathies of nature. She seemed abstracted and thoughtful,—a tear stood in her large eye; her lips became compressed, while she leaned her head upon her hand. Then she opened the Bible which lay in her lap, and read until the increasing darkness prevented her from distinguishing the letters. A star attracted her gaze, and she looked upward a long time watching its trembling light, as it grew brighter and brighter. The emotions which agitated the bosom of that young and beautiful girl may be best understood, if expressed in the almost incoherent manner in which they rose and fell, and succeeded each other. It may be the transcript of what others have felt before, in the like state of mind:—

“ I wish I was a star—any thing but what I now am. I wonder what I shall be. I wish I could look forward—how long? Only

ten years. Shall I be a Christian then? How relieved I should be if I only knew I should be. Mr Hartwell says, I must be one *now*, I know it; how all clergymen talk alike! Many times I have been serious, anxious for my salvation before; and it seems as if I felt less now. I don't think I feel enough. O, I fear to delay this subject—I can't delay: something tells me no, I must not,—I must this evening give myself to Jesus. When Mr Hartwell prayed, I hoped I should—I wish he had not gone. But he can do nothing for me; I must go to the Saviour myself. Yes, I must give up every thing; 'count all as loss that I may win Christ;—'strait and narrow way,'—yes, it is strait, but it leads to heaven. How much Jesus has done for me;—he has a *right* to my love, my time. O, how hard it is to repent,—consecrate myself to him—but, but"—and her thoughts went home to her native city. Must she give up all the brighter anticipations of the coming winter? It was to be her first season

of freedom from school, and entrance into society. Her parents were worldly people; while they believed in vital piety, they sedulously cultivated those talents in their daughter which would fit her to shine in the gay world. She early attracted the attention, and awakened the interest of her pastor; and both in public and private he had proved to her a faithful spiritual teacher. If she rejected the Saviour it was not the sin of ignorance: it was intelligent choice.

“Those pleasures must be given up; but what are they in comparison to my soul?—Will not father be disappointed? What will Lucy say? Why should I care? *Perhaps this will be my last opportunity.*” Again, he fancy pictured in glowing colours all those pleasures which wealth and respectability can procure. She thought of Lucy’s advice that day. “What shall I do?” was her inward exclamation. Conscience, “the still small voice,” spoke clearly and audibly to her. Sh

knew her duty too well ; still it grew late, and she was yet undecided. "I will read my Bible every day, and I shall become a Christian. At least, I will strive to retain as much interest as I now feel in religious subjects, and perhaps I shall feel more. But what does it mean, *Now* is the day of salvation ? If this *should* be the last time,—the last call. But God's mercy is boundless, one time as well as another. Salvation is not limited to time and place. I feel calmer." She retired to bed, perhaps unconscious to herself that she had followed the fearful, fatal example of memorable Felix.

The next day, the next, and the next, witnessed her calmer indeed, but it was the calmness of increasing indifference to the all-important subject of personal piety. At first she hoped it might be the peace which she had sought, and, although she knew the right too well to be long deluded, she felt no inclination to prove the truth. Unwilling to examine

herself closely by the Word of God, she quieted the fearful misgivings that occasionally came over her, by hoping in the end that every thing would be for the best. Poor Eliza Davis !

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRAYER MEETING.

THE private prayer-meeting had been held in one of the small recitation rooms, for several months, on Thursday evening; it was now thought expedient to transfer the meeting to a much larger apartment. Long before the appointed hour, one might have seen the young girls all turning their footsteps in one direction,—some singly and alone, in thoughtful mood,—some, in pairs, in earnest conversation—some, half reluctant, yielding to the affectionate solicitude of their companions,—some in need,—some in joy; all came,—all, moved by one mighty influence, came and sat together in the place of prayer.

It was a beautiful group,—the fair-haired

and dark-eyed,—the bold, free-hearted, and joyous,—the gentle, the timid, the retiring. The same deep seriousness rested on every face; the same chastened and subdued expression shaded every eye, and bowed every heart. There was a tie which bound them together now, deeper and holier than ever bound them before ;—all but one,—one whom they loved was not of them. O, the sweet and sacred stillness of that calm hour ! Some were beginning to enjoy a new life ; to taste the joys of redeeming love ;—were beginning to feel the sweet presence of the Saviour ;—were beginning to gather that moral energy which woman so emphatically needs in her little home sphere, whether as the faithful and affectionate daughter, or as the self-sacrificing and devoted wife.

The exercises were conducted by one of the assistant teachers. With the reading of the Bible a large part of the time was consecrated to prayer. How ardent the desires of the *newly awakened* spirit, palpitating with its

new-born consciousness of holier love, and higher hopes, and purer desires; taking its first steps heavenward, fearing, hoping, rejoicing!

Janette was requested to lead in prayer; she trembled, but did not refuse. Her voice, almost inarticulate when she first said, “Our Father,” gradually gained in depth and earnestness as she poured out her full soul in praise and thanksgiving. She seemed borne up to the very throne of God. She seemed panting for nearer and closer communion with the risen Saviour; and when she besought the grace of God to enlighten every mind, and bless every heart among them, she pleaded with an humble earnestness which touched every heart, and deepened every impression.

In an hour’s time the meeting was closed by the always beautiful parting hymn,—“Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing;” in which every voice joined, until the notes were borne through the still air, even to the remote chamber of *Lucy Barnard*.

Two sat side by side that evening who had long been open and avowed enemies, and whose disputes and bickerings had been the source of much angry and jealous feeling among the boarders. It was a quarrel which commenced nearly on their first arrival at Mrs Watson's, about some of their chamber rights, almost two years before. Though wisely separated, their antipathies had taken too deep root to be readily forgiven or forgotten. Now they both "trusted they had found Him who could redeem them." That evening they went out arm-in-arm ; and the honest reconciliation which then took place, the mutual good offices, and their hearty co-operation in all labours of love, which ever afterwards followed, did more in impressing the reality and the power of religion upon that little community, than the most eloquent sermon or affecting appeal could have done. Truly, piety is a "bond of perfectness," a perfect bond.

*Anne, Janette, and Eliza lingered awhile*

on the piazza before resuming their evening studies. "O, Anne, I am so happy!" said Janette; "and shall I not always feel so? People tell me it will not last long; but can I love Jesus less, the more I know him; and I love every one so. St John wrote for me, he speaks so much of love."

Janette was the child of emotion: and unlike many people of warm and ardent tempaments, her feelings were deep and abiding. She often expressed them, too, with a warmth and earnestness which seldom failed to awaken the sympathy and interest of others. The solemn conviction that she was living in the daily neglect of the great duties of life had repressed in a great degree the native buoyancy of her disposition for a year past, and had rendered her fitful and restless. But now that the burden of sin was removed, and she had come into the full liberty of the gospel, she almost felt a transport of love and gratitude.

*It is not always thus; many for weeks and*

months even, are in spiritual darkness, although they hope they have really chosen the way of life. The experience of one should never be made the model of another—so different are the dispositions of different individuals, notwithstanding the great features of conviction and conversion are always similar.

“Here we are together,” said she, “and once Lucy was always with us. O, how I have sought Lucy this week, and she has always avoided me! I love her now more than ever.”

“Her peculiar religious views you know, Janette,” replied Eliza. “Then she is so utterly prejudiced; can she not be convinced that there may be truth in repentance and conversion? Just a *may be*. That so many wise and good adopt such sentiments, surely entitles evangelical piety to some consideration. Dear Lucy!—but we can pray for her. God is a prayer-hearing God.”

*There was a slight movement among the*

woodbine leaves, in one corner of the piazza, but it was unnoticed. Eliza said little, but listened eagerly, and often thought, "I wish I felt as Janette does." There was an oppression upon her spirits which sleep only could relieve.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE STRUGGLE.

A SHORT time after they entered the house, a figure, which had been concealed by the thick clusters of woodbine and the darkness of the evening, glided from her shelter, darted through the open door, and hastened up stairs. It was Lucy; she had gone out on the piazza, hoping the cool evening air might allay the fever of her mind. When her friends appeared, she had no opportunity of escape, and she resolved not to meet them. Arriving at her chamber, she threw herself into a chair, and covered her face with her hands. She could not weep. " May be, may be," she murmured to herself; " yes, there is a may be." At length Lucy drew her chair to the table, and opened her

Bible; so interesting had it become to her, that the great clock in the hall struck two before she closed its sacred pages. Why was she so deeply interested? Was she arming herself with arguments against the affectionate entreaties of her friend Janette?

The next morning Lucy begged to be excused from attendance at school, pleading a headache, to which her extreme paleness bore testimony. She returned to her apartment, and was not seen again for the day, except by the domestic who attended her. Occupying her room alone, she was saved from intrusion; and she bade no welcome, nor gave sign of recognition to the gentle knocks which sometimes were heard upon her door. Janette exclaimed, "Please, dear, let me come in;" and received the reply, "I beg to be excused." "Lucy, let me come in; you know I lean upon you," pleaded Eliza. "A frail support, Eliza; indeed, I cannot see you."

*Lucy was engaged in a fearful contest. She*

had been an attentive listener to evangelical truth since she had been under Mrs Watson's care, and had been a close observer of events recently passing. "Are these things really so?" she asked herself again and again. "Am *I* a sinner, *utterly* unworthy before God? Is there no good thing in me acceptable? Is God a God of justice, casting the impenitent transgressor for ever from heaven? Has Christ come to redeem, as well as to set an example of well-doing?"

For a long time Lucy had been considering these inquiries as subjects of intellectual speculation, and she was surprised to find how great the proof upon every point in the sacred writings.

Now it was that the Holy Spirit was fastening divine truth upon her heart, and long and fearfully did she struggle against it. The prejudices of education, the mortification of adopting sentiments so often ridiculed by her friends and herself, could not easily be checked. They *rose up* and almost forbade her giving heed to

what she had once considered as “cunningly devised fables.” She imagined herself about to become the dupe of the designing; and, surprised at finding how strongly religious truth was impressed upon her mind, she sternly closed her ear to the subject, resolved to shut up every avenue through which she could receive instruction, and apply herself with increasing application to her studies. But the good seed had been planted. The Spirit of God will force its way through every obstacle to the imprisoned conscience. Lucy could resolve, she could cease reading the Word of God, she could close her door against pious friends, she could recall argument after argument against evangelical truth; but she could not free herself from a knowledge of those truths; “they were nailed upon her conscience,” as she afterwards said, “and they were omnipresent.”

She reopened the Scriptures, and asked, “Are these things so?” What she found there

made her fear and tremble. *If* her pious friends *were* right, and after all they might be, where was she? She felt she might be standing on dangerous ground. Upon her table had been placed "Doddridge's Rise and Progress," that most invaluable work for the anxious inquirer,—her heart told her by what kind hand. It was like a well of water to the traveller in the desert. Manifold difficulties arose in her mind. Amid the uprooting of old opinions, and the bright evidence flashing upon her intellectual eye, from every page of the Bible, of truths bearing such deep and awful meaning, she felt overwhelmed. A great work was before her, but where was she to begin?

With characteristic promptness, when once decided, she resolved to visit Mr Hartwell, the good clergyman under whose ministry she had been since becoming a member of Mrs Watson's family. She felt he could understand her state of mind—nor was she disappointed. For a *single* moment she hesitated on the threshold

of his door. It was a long interview; and what passed on that and several subsequent meetings, as often recurred to, rendered them the most striking and important periods of her life.

For more than a week, Lucy forbore conversation regarding the peculiar state of her own feelings with any one, save her pastor and Mrs Watson. She felt the vast importance of the subjects under consideration, and that the business she was transacting for eternity must be between God and her own soul.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SURRENDER.

JANETTE's first interview with Lucy can be but imperfectly described. Some fragments of their conversation will show something of her state of mind during this agitating season. Lucy sat upon a cricket beside her friend, clasping her hand in both Janette's. The humble and subdued expression of her countenance gave an interesting charm to her noble and interesting features.

“ The peace, the *rest* of mind I now enjoy, Janette, is unlike any thing I ever before experienced. I have enjoyed much, much in the proud exultation I felt in outstripping my companions in whatever I undertook ; much in the flatteries and praises of my friends ; *much in the proud anticipations* of what I

might become in society ; but they were the joys of an unsanctified heart. O, the infinite grace of God, to lead me to know myself ! ”

She was silent a few minutes, and then continued, “ Do you remember, Janette, the sermon Mr Hartwell preached upon the text, ‘ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ? ’ I smiled in pity and indignation, to see how strangely he misjudged the human heart. For, portraying the high and educated, I thought he took an example from the most corrupt, and I felt it to be a libel upon humanity. But, ah ! it is too true, —total alienation from God ! I imagined I loved God ; my heart always expanded at the sight of the blue sky, the green fields, grand and beautiful scenery. I loved nature, and mistook it for love to God. Janette, I knew Him not, nor understood Him but as the God of nature ; and yet that blessed book has been in my hand from infancy. His justice in punishing, and rightly punishing the sinner, as the

Bible points out, I had no conception of. The religious teachers I have had never spoke of deserved wrath,—deservedly cast for ever from heaven. When I looked into the Bible, to find arguments against Mr Hartwell's harsh doctrine,—a doctrine to frighten us into religion, as I supposed,—I was surprised to find how much the Bible leaned to his side; for I thought it *his* system still. But our fears *should* be awakened, Janette. When our body is sick, we do not send for a physician until our fears urge us. O! how our fears should be awakened, that we may be in haste to seek the Physician of the soul! When Mr Hartwell made us all under the just condemnation of the law, I was anxious to see what way of escape he would open for us. But 'Christ was offered up for us,'—'by his stripes we are healed,'—'Christ the atoning sacrifice.' How wonderful, and how beautiful the provision, Janette! I had always looked upon *Him* as a beautiful specimen of holy living,

and no more,—as one going about doing good,—and that as such we should imitate his example. But the mysterious and wonderful connection between Christ, the law, and the transgressor,—Christ shielding me from the terrific penalty of violated law,—I had no idea of. Yet I thought Mr Hartwell ingenious, and admired his intellectual skill.

“ Such has been the observation of two years. But lately, Janette, within a few weeks, these truths have come home to me with wonderful power. Beginning to feel that *I* had a soul to *save*, I grew alarmed at the impression his preaching had on me. I resolved to banish it. I was willing to hear, but not willing to adopt his views of truth. Indeed, I resolved I would not if they were truth. O, Janette, Janette, the fierce struggles I have had! The remembrances have seemed peculiarly painful, but,” she continued,—“ but I could not banish convictions of duty ; I grew uneasy ; *my heart was filled with rage, rage against*

every one who felt any interest in my salvation,—I would not bear the subject,—rage against you, dear Janette. O, the Bible is true in its portrait of the human heart! Is not sin a fearful thing? I continued thus a long time. Infinite is the mercy of God not to have left me in my blindness and wretchedness. Then it was I repulsed you so often, my dearest friend. God did not leave me. How appropriate is the expression, ‘A brand from the burning.’ Then I felt more and more, that after all I *had* a soul to save, and perhaps *now* was the time to secure its salvation. I could not rid myself of the thought. O, Janette, it is God that has done all for me,—infinite, sovereign mercy! I resisted, and would have gone back to my blindness; but his voice within urged me forward, until I dared not resist. I now scarcely know where I stand, but the *struggle* is over, the burden of sin is removed. I feel drawn, as it were, towards my Saviour, my only hope and present

help, crucified *for me*. There was a time when I regarded Him with indifference ; nay more, when"—she paused—"but now is He not 'precious,' the 'one altogether lovely ?' May I be long spared to live my love and gratitude to Him ! "

The friends mingled their tears together. As friends of Jesus, they felt a sweet and delightful sympathy for each other. What communion so pure, so holy, so elevated, as the communion of holy joy !—each recognising in each other the image of Him who redeemed them.

## CHAPTER X.

### RESULTS.

It would be saying too much to assert that all who became interested in the subject of religion at that time, or who hoped that they had passed from death unto life, continued steadfast. At such seasons there are almost always some who for a time manifest great interest, and then go away and walk no more with the people of God. It is hoped that a large proportion of those who now felt that they had chosen the good part, became beautiful examples of Christian faith and holy living. There never could have been a happier community than was that at Mrs Watson's *during the remainder of the term.* They walked

in love, and joy, and hope ; aiding each other in the path of improvement, and strengthening each other in every good word and work. What a world of motives had been opened to those young hearts ! They were serving God in diligent attention to their studies, and by prompt and punctual performance of duty. While they anticipated with pleasure meeting their parents, brothers, and sisters, they mourned at the approaching separation from that dear and now hallowed spot, from the valued teachings of Mrs Watson, and from the dear friends with whom they began their Christian course.

The term at last approached its close. The examination was over, and the last evening at the seminary arrived. There were trunks packed ; familiar school-books were no longer seen upon the tables ; the rooms no longer wore their usual tidy appearance ; there was a quick hurrying to and fro in the halls, and gatherings here and there to talk of to-mor-

now and of going home ;—how many hearts  
were hurriedly and gaily :

Janette, Anne, Eliza, and a few others, gathered together in Lucy's chamber, for the last time. They desired once more to spend a brief session in waiting their petitions at the throne of mercy : they sought strength and wisdom to act consistently in the new life which they professed, and to do honour to the cause of their blessed Master.

Though residing in different towns, they talked of meeting often, of uniting in plans of improvement and of benevolence ; every thing seemed practicable. There is too much of hope in the spring-time of life to realize how frail are earthly anticipations, and how few are ever fulfilled.

They sung a parting hymn, and were about to separate. "Perhaps our next meeting may be in heaven," said Janette. "Who will go first to welcome us?" The remark impressed each spirit, and they inwardly

prayed for strength to reach that heavenly abode.

The next morning witnessed renewed expressions of attachment—tender blessings and kind advice from the dear teacher—farewell kisses and tearful adieus—joy and sadness. The eastern and western stages rolled away from the door ; carriages, with brothers and fathers, bore away their half-weeping, half-laughing burdens ; and in a day or two, the seminary was left to the quiet of the long vacation.

The conversions which took place at this time were especially marked by deep convictions of sin. There may be almost overwhelming convictions of sin without true repentance ; and it would be impossible to tell, and unwise to prescribe, how deeply the sinner should feel his departure from duty, before he will be made ready to accept the offers of mercy ; but we do know that he who feels *himself the most needy, most unworthy, most*

debased by sin, will feel greater corresponding emotions of love, joy, and gratitude towards Him who has appeared for his redemption and we find, in the annals of Christian biography, that they have been the most self-denying, faithful, and devoted Christians, who have had the clearest views of their own weakness and depravity. The nearer and dearer is the view of perfect holiness, the more hideous and deformed must sin ever appear.

It is greatly to be feared, that too many apply to themselves the pardon and promises of the gospel, to whom the Saviour will one day say, "I never knew you!" Uneasiness is felt, self-love is wounded, friends are weeping and affectionately exhorting, *desires of safety* are excited, until it becomes an easy thing to mistake these varied and mixed emotions for hatred towards sin committed against a just and holy God—tenderness of heart arising from a peculiar and affecting arrangement of circumstances, for repentance and submission.

—and the quietness of subsiding emotion, for the peace of forgiven sin. A mistake here is an infinite mistake. True, after an individual who has made it has become connected with the church, he may occasionally arouse himself to the consciousness that his heart does not kindle with holy love, or his life manifest devotedness in the service of God; still there is a latent feeling of security, arising from the fact that he is numbered among the people of God, which quiets his apprehensions, and makes the probability become less and less every day, that he will ever arouse to a sense of his fearful and alarming condition. Is it not to be feared there are multitudes in the church of this description, clogging its operations, deadening its spirituality, and eliciting the censures and condemnation of the world?

## CHAPTER XI.

### HOW IT WAS AFTER FIVE YEARS.

FIVE years passed away, and what had they unfolded to the bright and happy spirits, who, full of hope, had parted at the seminary hall? Janette, Eliza, and Lucy were all numbered with the dead. If we follow them to the close of life, my young readers may learn the infinite importance of securing our personal salvation at the “accepted time,” and the priceless value of Christian faith at the last hour.

About three years after the events here recorded, the following letter was received by Anne, which will best and most beautifully describe, in the tender and pathetic language of a mother, the lovely character and sustaining *faith of her only daughter.* Anne and Janette

had ever continued a close correspondence, and had been on terms of affectionate intimacy ever since they left school:—

“Janette, my beloved child, has gone,—gone home to heaven. Although she was the last earthly prop of my declining life, the only object of affection left to me on earth, companion of my solitude and sharer of every comfort,—although she was my earthly all, and I am left alone to pursue my pilgrimage, a widow and childless, yet, my dear Anne, I feel no tumultuous grief; my sorrow is sorrow indeed, but it is neither bitter nor repining. I think of her always, I weep for her; every room, her books, her work—every thing—speaks to me of her. I am alone, but, O! I wish not for her return to me! I feel she is safe in those blessed mansions. She has seen Jesus—she is rejoicing with saints and angels—she is with her father. I have two in heaven to welcome me, if ever I am so happy as to reach that hallowed abode. It seems to draw me nearer and

nearer there. May both of us, my dear Anne, be as well prepared to go as I think my beloved child was. It was delightful to be near her, and even when I felt this sickness was to be her last, I felt elevated and sustained. She had been drooping, you know, for some weeks. For a long time she was unwilling to acknowledge herself unwell, or to withdraw her active efforts from the different benevolent objects in which she had become ardently interested. Janette was eminently active in her Master's service; her interest never flagged, her activity never diminished, for a day since her return from \_\_\_\_\_ seminary. 'O, mother, dear mother,' she often said to me, when I expressed my fears that she might undertake too much, 'life is very short; let me do with my might, while I have time and opportunity; Jesus strengthens me.' O! the good she did the little while she was spared on earth! When a friend of her father told her he wished every one *would imitate her active piety*, she almost wept

that she had been able to do so little in her Master's service. Week after week she grew more and more feeble, until, by the command of her physician, she was compelled to relinquish most of her engagements. The last thing she gave up was a class of poor children. She had been in the habit of meeting them an hour every day to teach them reading and sewing. She felt the tenderest interest in their welfare, and they almost idolized her; indeed, we hope some of them have become subjects of divine grace, through her instrumentality. When she became confined to her room, and unable to see any one, they begged the privilege of giving one look upon their 'dear Miss Janette.' Her disease, an internal complaint, became more and more violent. For a time, we hoped rest would retard its progress; but she grew worse very rapidly after she became confined to the house—from the parlour to her chamber—from her chamber to her bed. 'Mother, I shall never leave this chamber until I leave it.'

for ever.' 'I hope you will be long spared to us, my dear,' and I could not restrain my tears. 'Dear mother, I hope you will be submissive to the will of our heavenly Father; while he takes me from you, he will more than supply my place, by his blessed presence, his sweet consolations; and our parting will be only for a little while.' So she always talked; and even on those days when she was easier, and I hoped she was better, she gently endeavoured to subdue my rising hopes and to familiarize my mind to her speedy departure. Janette was a great sufferer; her spasms were often long and violent, but she bore every pain, every suffering, without a groan, without a murmur. 'Mother, Jesus is with me; He sustains me. Mother, how much Jesus suffered for my sake; and shall I complain? I am so happy, I forget my pains when I think of Him.' Thus she ever felt. A distinguishing feature in her Christian character was joy in the Lord. She *had given herself up unreservedly to Him*, and

she was rewarded by a faith that never wavered, by a love that never grew cold. She rejoiced in the Lord always, in pains and suffering ; she smiled and clung to Jesus as her very present help in the time of need. Her minister loved to be with her. In her, he said, he could realize the spirit of heaven. Her friends could seldom be admitted, the slightest effort producing spasms. Of you, Miss Barnard, and other dear absent friends, she spoke with the tenderest interest, and she felt she would meet you where there would be no more sin, no more partings. On the morning of her death (she had lain the whole night insensible) she revived, and begged me to open the curtains. The sun was just rising. ‘O, mother, how glorious ! But I shall soon see the Sun of Righteousness —I feel His healing beams. Dear mother, give me your hand ; kiss me once more.’ She then sunk back insensible. Again she opened her eyes ; light flashed from them ; a heavenly smile shone over her whole face. ‘Blessed

Saviour ; for ever, ever thine ! ' She gasped—  
my beloved child had breathed her last !

" I will not attempt to describe my own feelings as I turned away from the dear remains of my last cherished object of affection. May my last end be like hers ! Every one mourns for her. The Sabbath school mourns the loss of a faithful teacher ; the prayer meetings one who prayed always ; our benevolent societies, an active and valuable member ; the poor, an ever ready friend ; the sick, a cheerful sympathizer ; her companions, one most dear to them ; and I,—I have lost my earthly all ;—no, she is not lost but gone before. Though dead, she yet speaks to my bereaved heart words of comfort, and bids me *trust*. I am supported—God is my strong support. I will not lengthen my letter at this time, my dear Anne. Let me have the sweet satisfaction of hearing frequently from the valued friend of my beloved child. I shall always feel a deep *interest in your welfare*. God bless and keep

you, and make you an instrument of great usefulness in the kingdom of his dear Son, is the prayer of " — — —."

A mother's affection has not portrayed in too glowing colours the usefulness and loveliness of her daughter's character.

Let me transfer my readers to a rich and elegant dwelling in one of our mercantile cities. Every thing both within and without denoted the presence of refinement, wealth, and elegance. Rich carpets, marble pier tables, damask curtains, decorated the parlours ; every niche and corner abounded with those thousand nameless conveniences, the absence of which does not create a want, while their presence adds so much to the mere luxury of life.

The occupants of the house were a newly-married pair in the heyday of life and prosperity. They were the ornaments as well as the leaders of the fashionable society of the city, and were courted, caressed, and admired : their sayings were repeated, their fashions imi-

tated, their acquaintance sought, their parties crowded.

Mrs B—— was elegant in her person, and graceful in her manners. The same rich curls adorned her face which made her beautiful in girlhood. Flattered, how could she be otherwise than smiling ; every wish gratified, how could she choose but be happy ? Many strangers were visiting the city that winter, and party after party, and ball after ball, followed each other in rapid succession. A visitor every where, what had she to do with sorrow, or sickness, or death ? If thoughts of these ever did force themselves upon her notice and compel her to reflection, perhaps she banished them, as once she did when they were suggested by the reception of a long letter from one who loved her. “ Poor Lucy ! I hope she will recover. Her letters are all on one subject. Pshaw, pshaw ; not yet—not yet, my dear, kind, puritanical friend. There is time enough ; —*and yet she is fading early*. Yes there is

time." She paused, looked thoughtful, and added, "I *hope* there is time;—to die unprepared! Heaven forbid!"

Towards the close of the season, the beautiful Mrs B—— suddenly disappeared from the gay world, and was laid upon the bed of sickness. She gave premature birth to a dying infant, and herself hastened to follow the little one into eternity. Seeing the alarmed gaze of the attendants, who surrounded her bedside, and the deep anguish which her father and husband in vain endeavoured to conceal, "O, my God!" she exclaimed, in terrified accents, "tell me, tell me—why do you look thus upon me?—am I—am I——?" On recovering from a fainting fit, into which the violence of her emotions had thrown her, she clasped her father's hand, exclaiming, "O, father, tell me, tell me if I am"—"Dying!" gasped the agonized parent; "Eliza, you are dying!" "I cannot die!—I cannot die!" she almost shrieked. "O, father,"—her father was a physician.—

“ father, save me—save me—save your child—I cannot—will not die!”

Endeavouring to raise herself, she exclaimed, still more vehemently, “ Die now—now? I am not ready to die;—how shall I appear before God? Pray for me—I cannot pray;—I have abused the grace of God—I have trifled away my day of grace—I have rejected the Saviour. Janette, pray for me—pray for me. Lucy—Lucy, you did strive to enter in;—I—I had opportunity and rejected it. Lost—lost—one week more—one day—father, can you do nothing?—your child beseeches you:—I cannot die. I—I have not repented! Pray for me!—lost!”

These were the last words she uttered. The terrified expression of her countenance, and the fearful agony of the death-struggle which accompanied her departing spirit, sent a thrill of horror into the hearts of those around her, and made an impression which time can *scarcely efface.*

Poor Eliza Davis ! What did it profit her —what will it profit any one, to gain all that this world can give, and yet lose the soul ?

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What of Lucy Barnard ? It seemed not the same Lucy that returned to her home from school after two years' absence. She was the same in intellectual vigour and literary taste; the same in the brilliancy and beauty of her person and figure; but the other Lucy was proud and self-willed; this Lucy was gentle, and meek, and humble.

Her friends were indignant and disappointed, when her first letter informed them of the change which had passed over her opinions and principles. They could scarcely believe their child could be led so far astray; and declared it must not be, that she should so disappoint their fondest, dearest anticipations.

Mr Barnard uttered many indignant threats against Mrs Watson's proselyting spirit; but consoled himself that in time the thing would

wear away. Cousin George feared she must now be lost to him, and to society, for ever.

Lucy returned to them ; and while they determined to remain unmoved by her cant, as it was termed, she entirely disarmed them by the loveliness and gentleness of her demeanour. It was not very long before they felt that a purer and holier spirit had been shed abroad in her heart, and that she was actuated by higher principles than ever before. They felt that she was changed. And her sincerity, and quiet dignity, and gentle earnestness, forbade reproach or angry feeling.

Lucy knew the strength of her father's prejudices, and she would not willingly arouse them, but strove rather to subdue them, by recommending evangelical truth, in meekness and lowliness of mind. She had dreaded her father's influence—not that she felt she could ever relinquish her own views upon the subject of religion ; but she feared that her reverence and affection for him might betray her

into too great conformity to what she deemed not right. She knew he would attack her opinions, both with argument and satire, and she made the Word of God her constant study, that she might direct him there for the truth of what she believed ; at the same time, she earnestly prayed that God might open his heart to understand it by his good Spirit.

Lucy had not overestimated the temptations that would beset her on her return home. Mr Barnard laboured unweariedly, and even adroitly, to undermine her belief, by a skilful use of sophistry and satire ; her mother filled her house with company, and cousin George placed around her the most seductive and dangerous literature. How alluring are those temptations which are too often thrown around us by the hand of affection,—mistaken affection ! We do not often recognise them as temptations, until we feel the blighting influence upon our spiritual life.

But Lucy *was steadfast* ; her chamber wit-

nessed the tears, the prayers, the struggles, the resolutions, which enabled her to walk worthy the vocation wherewith she was called. She was kept, through the grace of God, for a light to shine in those dark places, to show the knowledge of Jesus, until her father bore testimony to her Christian character. "Lucy, you can go to church when you please; you have yielded to my unreasonable commands with so much meekness; you are so different from the self-willed child you once were, that I believe your church has at least a transforming power in making people better." He had, by an unjust exercise of parental power, prohibited her from attending the church where she felt she could listen to the truths dearest to her soul.

Lucy's influence had already begun to work a gradual change in the opinions and habits of her father's family. Consistent, elevated Christian character will always commend itself to the most irreligious, and impress its reality and *beauty* upon every one within its sphere of

influence. “Ye are the salt of the earth,” says the Saviour to his disciples, and salt *will* purify whatever it comes in contact with.

But Lucy was destined to an early grave. She was the inheritor of a fatal malady, which had laid low many who were near and dear to her—consumption. We must pass over the first developments of the disease, the distressing apprehensions, the fears and hopes, which distracted her family—the slight cough, the quickened respiration, the deep hectic—symptom after symptom appeared with fatal precision; medicine, care, affection had no power to stop the slow but sure decay, until the last desperate means was resorted to—a sea-voyage to escape the rigours of our northern winter; trusting to prolong, if not to save, the life of one now doubly dear to them.

The sufferer herself felt it would be in vain, and desired rather to die among her kindred at home, and be buried where her brothers and sisters had been buried; but how could

she resist the anxious solicitude of her sorrowing parents? They still clung to hope, as hope after hope departed.

With a full heart she bade a last farewell to the dear familiar scenes of her early home, and, accompanied by her parents, and cousin George, left her native land. One of her last acts was writing her friend Eliza a long and affectionate letter, beseeching her to find that peace in believing which she had done, and again entreating her forgiveness for the manner in which she had spoken of piety in the days of their early intercourse. The recollections of her opposition and irreligion during the first week of that school revival, were among the bitterest of her life.

Mr and Mrs Barnard, with their precious charge, reached the West Indies. The warm, genial air restored the beloved invalid, and, for a while, she seemed so much renovated, that they even anticipated the entire re-estab-



lishment of her health, and a joyful return to their distant home.

They had sailed about a week on their returning voyage, when it became painfully evident that the dear child was rapidly declining. It was a day of fresh, delicious winds; but the pure air, the beautiful sky, the gentle motion of the vessel, all failed to impart their wonted delight to the invalid, as she reclined upon her couch upon the deck. She breathed quickly, and spoke with increasing difficulty:—"Raise me on your bosom, mother, I am going home first," she said, "and I am going alone." "Are you not afraid, Lucy?" asked the weeping mother. "Perfect peace—no fear—calm—calm—I long to go. O, mother, believe in Christ; He can make a dying bed soft—peaceful—full of joy. Father, dearest father, there is reality in repentance, salvation, believing;—come to Jesus. George, let me take your hand—give to Jesus your affections—live for heaven—live for God." She looked

up with a countenance full of heavenly love. "O, George, devote your time—talents—to Him who—died—for—sinners—will you—the last promise."

Her words became inaudible, but her eye shone with holy joy, as the sorrowing young man sobbed out, "Yes, dearest, yes—I will become a follower of Jesus." "Father—mother—come to Jesus." There was a struggle, and the spirit was no longer there.

Lucy's prayers and Lucy's example were not in vain. It is hoped that the three who were most dear to her, who had witnessed her patient endurance, her meek resignation, her faith, that grew brightest at the last hour, redeemed the promise made at her dying couch, and have become faithful and devoted Christians.

THE END.

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